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DEFENSE STUDY GROUP



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-3705

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May 5, 2004

The Honorable John Ashcroft
Attorney General
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Ashcroft:

We are writing to formally request that the Justice Department conduct an investigation into any and all alleged abuses by private contractors at the Abu Ghurayb Prison and other detention facilities in Iraq.

Photographs of the abuse and humiliation of Iraqi prisoners at the Abu Ghurayb Prison have now been broadcast throughout the world and have created an immediate backlash in the Middle East and across the globe. The shocking allegations come at a pivotal time as we work towards the June 30th transition of sovereignty. It is imperative that the U.S. government takes whatever actions necessary to restore American credibility.

An internal report conducted by Army Major General Antonio M. Taguba several months ago allegedly states that the abuses at Abu Ghurayb Prison involved members of the Armed Forces, private contractors hired by the Department of Defense, and possibly members of the intelligence community. The Department of Defense has stated it is acting to fully investigate and charge those named in the leaked internal report. Seven officers have been given administrative reprimands and six members of a U.S. Army Reserve unit assigned to Abu Ghurayb prison face courts-martial on charges of assault, cruelty, indecent acts, and maltreatment of detainees.

While we are encouraged that the DoD has made appropriate action against those responsible for these appalling acts a top priority, there remains considerable confusion about what accountability, if any, the private contractors will be held to. In fact, recent news reports indicate that the two private contractors mentioned in the classified report are still employed in Iraq and may still be in positions of responsibility. Under the Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act of 2000, the U.S. Department of Justice has the ability to investigate and prosecute criminal offenses by persons employed by or

accompanying the Armed Forces outside of the United States. We strongly urge the Justice Department to use these powers authorized by Congress to immediately investigate the alleged abuse by private contractors and, should there be evidence of criminal wrongdoing, to prosecute any individuals to the fullest extent of the law.

America's credibility has been damaged because of these allegations and the distribution of these troubling photographs. The easiest way for us to regain credibility and to reaffirm our commitment to human rights will be to fully and openly investigate these allegations with every resource we have available. We hope you will begin a DOJ investigation immediately.

Sincerely,


Darlene Hooley
Member of Congress


John Conyers
Member of Congress


John Spratt
Member of Congress


Lane Evans
Member of Congress

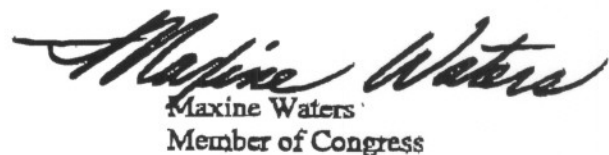

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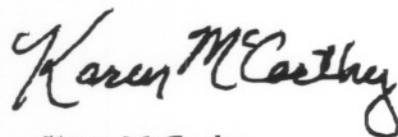

Ellen Tauscher
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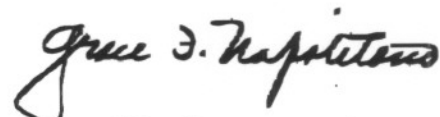

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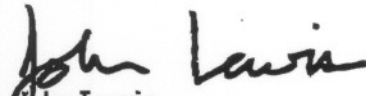

Artur Davis
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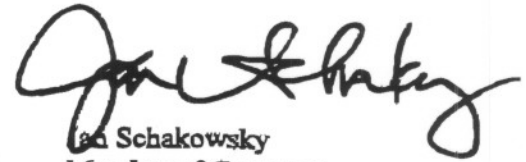
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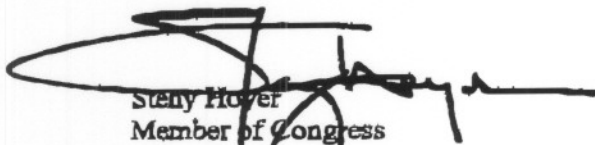
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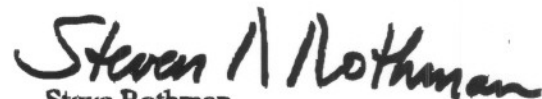


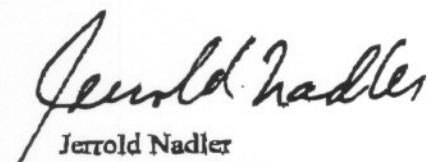
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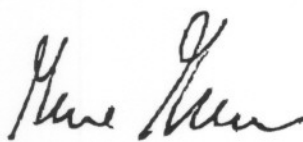

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William Delahunt
Member of Congress

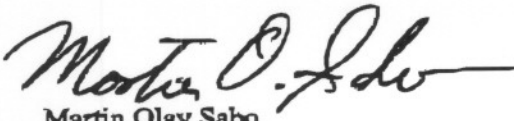

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Jim Turner
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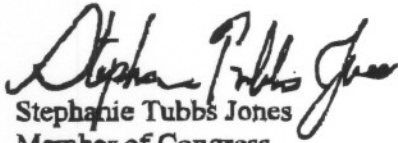
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Dennis Moore
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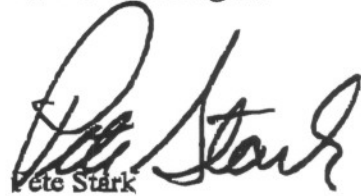
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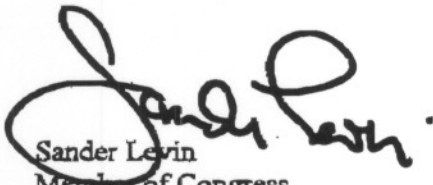
Rosa DeLauro
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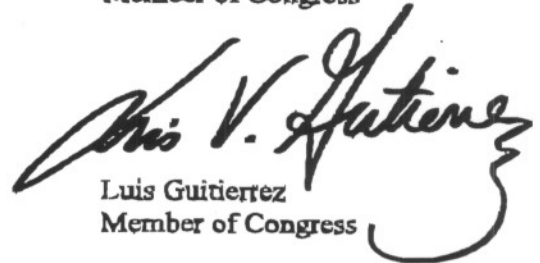
David Price
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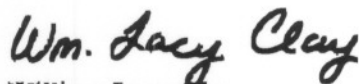
Pete Stark
Member of Congress



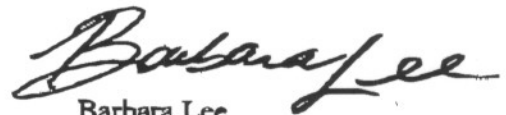
Sander Levin
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Luis Guitierrez
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William Lacy Clay
Member of Congress



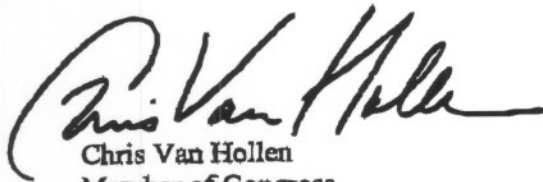
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

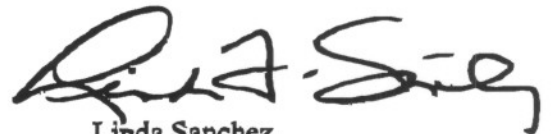


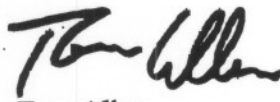
Michael Capuano
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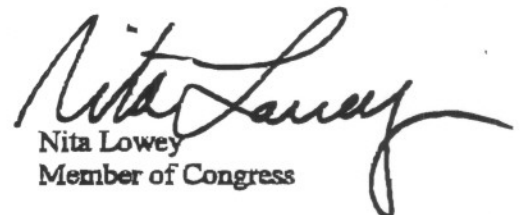

Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress

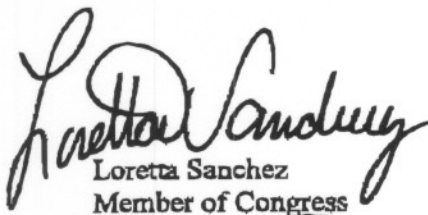

Linda Sanchez
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Tom Allen
Member of Congress

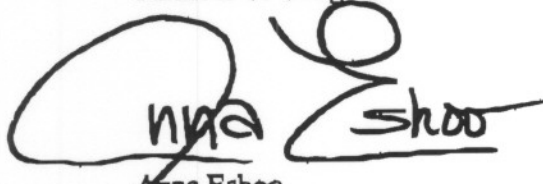

Earl Blumenauer
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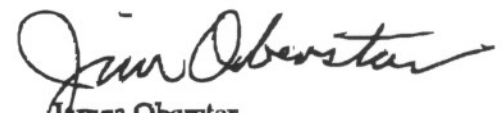

Juanita Millender-McDonald
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Nita Lowey
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Loretta Sanchez
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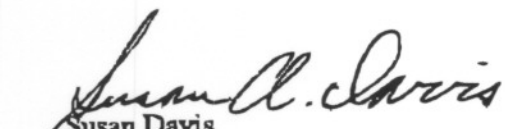

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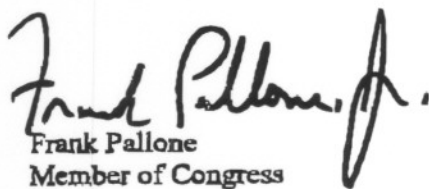

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Ken Lucas
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Frank Pallone
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Martin Frost
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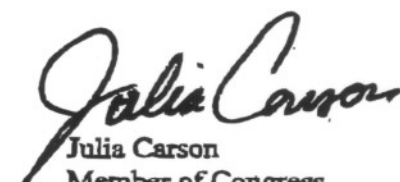

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Member of Congress

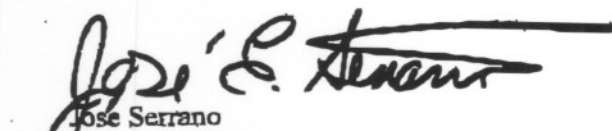

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Member of Congress


Mike Honda
Member of Congress

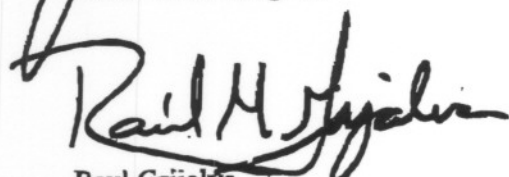

Louise Slaughter
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Julia Carson
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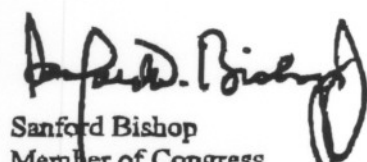

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Sanford Bishop
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